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The "Gaza famine" myth

No facts can be allowed to disturb the blood libels against Israel

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Aid supplies in Gaza warehouse, waiting for UN to distribute

It's now quite clear that there are simply no facts at all — *none* — that will alter the fixed narrative of lies, distortions and blood libels with which the liberal internationalist order is demonising and delegitimising Israel.

The claim that Israel is starving the civilians of Gaza and causing an imminent famine has been pumped out incessantly since soon after the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war.

In February, the United Nations said that more than a quarter of Gaza's 2.3 million people were "estimated to be facing catastrophic levels of deprivation

and starvation" and that, without action, widespread famine was "almost inevitable".

In March, Biden administration officials told Benny Gantz — then a member of Israel's war cabinet who was visiting Washington DC — that the "food shortage crisis" impacting Palestinians in Gaza was "intolerable".

At the end of that month, Janti Soeripto, president and chief executive of Save the Children US, declared that famine and starvation in Gaza were already happening.

In May, Director of the World Food Programme Cindy McCain said that parts of Gaza were experiencing a "full-blown famine" that was rapidly spreading throughout the territory.

Also last month, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court sought arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant on the grounds that Israel was "causing starvation as a method of war including the denial of humanitarian relief supplies [and] deliberately targeting civilians in conflict".s

The world has brushed aside Israel's repeated protests that there has been no shortage of food trucks arriving with aid for Gaza and that the problem lay instead with distribution because Hamas was stealing the supplies.

Instead, the liberal international establishment has repeatedly demanded that Israel immediately stop the war, thus inescapably surrendering to Hamas and forfeiting the military leverage required to free the remaining hostages.

Yet now, the famine claims have been debunked.

The Famine Review Committee (FRC) conducts investigations into world hunger on behalf of a partnership formed between governments, international organisations and NGOs.

In March, the committee reported that "famine is now projected and imminent" in northern Gaza and was expected to take hold before the end of May. Preventing such a famine, it stated, required "an immediate political

decision for a ceasefire together with a significant and immediate increase in humanitarian and commercial access to the entire population of Gaza".

In April, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), a food security monitoring initiative founded in 1985 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), went even further by stating there was "reasonable evidence" that, since April, northern Gaza had been experiencing a famine and this would persist at least until the end of July.

But on June 4, the Famine Review Committee published a report in which it rejected the FEWS NET analysis as not "plausible" and said it could not endorse its famine projection.

The committee said there was a lack of reliable evidence about the number of trucks entering Gaza and the level of humanitarian assistance that was arriving and being distributed around its various areas.

In order to compensate for these gaps in the data, it said, FEWS NET had relied on "multiple layers of assumptions and inference" about food availability and access as well as nutritional status and mortality, and had made "deliberate choices over assumptions, without the necessary supporting evidence".

Such assumptions, said the committee, had ignored or underestimated the value of both commercial sources of food and certain forms of humanitarian aid.

Although this didn't alter the fact that Gaza was experiencing "extreme human suffering" and that urgent measures were needed to boost humanitarian supplies, the committee concluded that flows of aid and the availability of food had increased significantly in March and April and "that nearly 100 percent of daily kilocalorie requirements were available for the estimated population of 300,000 people in April, even using conservative calculations".

In other words, the committee reversed its own dire predictions and damned the famine early warning network for excluding evidence that gave the lie to its anti-Israel narrative. The categorical declarations of imminent famine being caused by wicked, heartless, war-criminal Israel just weren't true.

It's worth remembering that USAID, the parent body of FEWS NET, is run by Samantha Power, who served as US ambassador to the United Nations during the Obama administration.

In 2002, Power suggested in a "thought experiment" that America might have to invade Israel to prevent an Israeli genocide against the Palestinians. She also suggested that the only people who might be alienated by this would be American Jews, who she said exercised tremendous political and financial power over America.

Other research has also exploded the "Gaza famine" claims. At Columbia University, two professors have said the evidence shows that sufficient amounts of food are being supplied to Gaza.

They told *The Jerusalem Post* that it was "a myth that Israel is responsible for famine in Gaza" and suggested that the International Criminal Court and UN had joined Hamas in blaming Israel for a "famine that never was, hoping to stop the war".

Yet there are no signs that these rebuttals of the "Gaza famine" claim are having any effect on the Israel-bashing crowd. A few days ago, *The New York Times* was still referring to "starving civilians" and blaming deaths from malnutrition on "restrictions on aid and commercial goods entering Gaza".

BBC News reported this week that "warnings of famine are looming once again in northern Gaza," broadcasting distressing footage of infants said to be suffering from dehydration and malnutrition caused by restrictions on aid at the Rafah and Kerem Shalom border crossings.

Other than Fox News, it seems that no mainstream media outlet has reported the Famine Review Committee's findings that the claim of famine in Gaza cannot be justified. Nor have the anti-Israel humanitarian organisations, although the World Health Organisation's Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has now subtly adjusted his rhetoric by talking about "famine-like conditions".

Famine is not the only anti-Israel falsehood whose debunking has been ignored. The mainstream media and humanitarian crowd are still using the Hamas figure of 37,000-plus civilians killed in Gaza, despite the fact that the

UN itself revised its own casualty totals sharply downwards after it emerged that some of the claimed deaths had been drawn from media sources and were fabricated.

Some outlets such as *The New York Times*, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and *Time* magazine are still claiming that the International Court of Justice said the Palestinians in Gaza faced a “plausible risk of genocide” even though the court said no such thing. As the ICJ President Joan Donoghue herself said, the court decided “that the Palestinians had a plausible right to be protected from genocide. … It didn’t decide that the claim of genocide was plausible”.

While Israel continues to be defamed by blood libels about famine and its war of self-defence in Gaza, some five million are facing actual famine in Sudan where up to 150,000 have been killed and up to 10 million displaced. Some 25 million are estimated to need humanitarian assistance as a result of a 14 month-long civil war.

Yet this vast and catastrophic scale of human suffering is being almost totally ignored. On Fox News, Hadeel Oueis, editor-in-chief of the pan-Arab media outlet *Jusoor*, said: “Sudanese [people] are asking why the world turns a blind eye as the third-largest country in Africa is laid to waste while at the same time fixating on the smaller conflict in Gaza.”

Good question. The answer is as obvious as it is brutal: the world only cares about suffering humanity when it can blame the Jews. That malevolent prism shapes a fixed and murderous narrative about Israel and the Jewish people that no actual facts can be allowed to disturb.

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